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Mahomet and Irene.

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Mahomet and Irene.

I N A
LETTER
T O

The AUTHOR.

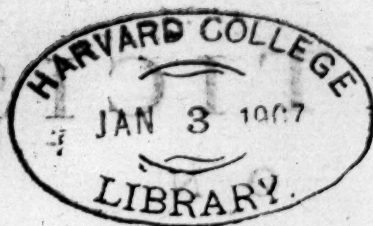
----- *I seek Occasions, court Abuse,
To shew my Parts, and signalize my Muse.*

OLDHAM.

L O N D O N :

Printed and sold by *W. Reeve*, in *Fleet-Street*; and *A. Dodd*, opposite *St. Clement's Church*, in the *Strand*. 1749.

[Price Six - pence.]



The gift of

Ernest Blancy Dane

LETTER

TO

The Author

*Printed and sold by W. Rees, in Fleet-
Street, and A. Dodd, opposite St. Cis-
ter's Church, in the Strand. 1749.*

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A
C R I T I C I S M
O N
Mabomet and Irene.
I N A
L E T T E R
T O
The A U T H O R.

S I R,
YOU must not wonder that
your Tragedy of *Irene* en-
gross'd, for some Months be-
fore its Appearance, the Con-
versation of the Town, and every one
B was

was big with Expectation of seeing a Piece plann'd, and wrote up to the highest Pitch of a Dramatic Performance; but as they are, in some Measure, disappointed in both Particulars, you can't be surpriz'd they now grow clamorous in their Censures: And tho' some may take you to Pieces without Mercy, behind your Back, I think it more generous to do it to your Face, and will handle you as tenderly as the Nature of your Offence will admit of. — And that I may not destroy your Virtues among the Crowd of your Vices, I will singly call 'em before me, and convict 'em one by one.

The first Thing I have to enquire into, is your Scene; which, I think, you have plac'd in the Garden of the Seraglio: Nay, in the most private and sequester'd Walks of it; which the Sultan, being deep in Love and fond of Melancholly, had chosen for his own Retirement. — This, I think, is the Place where your two *Grecian* Heroes, in *Turkish* Habits, open the Play;

Play ; which, I doubt not, amaz'd every Body, to think how they got there : For the Seraglio being a Place so guarded by Slaves, and kept sacred to the Sultan's Pleasures, how should it be possible two strange *Turks* (suppose they were really so) durst appear, dress'd in all the Magnificence of eastern State, in the most retir'd Walks of the Palace Garden, and never be enquir'd after ? It is certain, there is not a Janizary upon Duty, or Servant at his Labour, but knows every Person who has Authority to frequent those Shades, as well as the Gate-Keepers do who has a Right to ride through *St. James's-Park*.——I can hardly think their Friend *Cali* wou'd place 'em there to be out of Sight. No ; 'tis plain he knew better——for when he was dispos'd to break his Mind to *Demetrius* ONLY, he very cautiously advis'd his Friend *Abdalla* to a properer Place, as you have very judiciously describ'd :

—— He

— He seiz'd my doubtful Hand,
 And led me to the Shore where *Cali*
 stood
Pensive, and list'ning to the beating
Surge, &c.

This Shore mention'd, cou'd not be within the Bounds of the Seraglio; for, it is well known, that Palace is guarded next the Sea by very strong and high Fortifications, and no other Building near the Place. Here *Cali* told *Demetrius* his Purpose; and, I suppose, desir'd to see his Friend *Leontius* for the same End, and, I shou'd think, at the same Place: But whether *Leontius* was afraid of catching Cold, or daubing his Feet by the Water-side, I can't tell; yet it is certain, the Place is chang'd from the silent Shore to the Sultan's Gardens, where *Cali* meets him and his Friend, and they talk Treason as loud as *Syphax* and *Sempronius* do in the Hall of *Utica* — An Error very wisely remark'd by a deceas'd Critic.

In

In the Course of these Traitors Conversation, *Cali*, talking of tyrannic Government, breaks out in an Ecstasy :

*If there be any Clime, as Fame reports,
Where common Laws restrain the
Prince and People, &c.*

If, quotha! There's a Statesman indeed! that cou'd not be certain whether there was any Country, whose Constitution differ'd from his own—— After that Confession of his Ignorance, I did not at all doubt, but he introduc'd the *Greeks* into the Palace to be private.

Cali here gives a very odd Account of the Sultan's Temper—— Really, such a sudden, undetermined Character he gives him, that we may, without great Absurdity, take him for a Madman.—— He says—— *Aspasia* being brought before the Sultan, he was so struck with her uncommon Beauty
and

and Behaviour, that he immediately offer'd to make her his Queen; which she, from some nice Scruples of Conscience and Religion, join'd to her strong Attachment to *Demetrius*, refus'd. This so inflam'd him, that he was almost incens'd to offer Violence—— But very lucky for her, *another Plunderer* (so he is stil'd) just in that Moment brought in *Irene*; upon which, the Sultan turn'd round, and offer'd, in the same Moment he was courting *Aspasia*, the Crown to her; and finding not so much Aversion there, as in the other Lady, pursu'd his Point with *Irene*, and never once thought of *Aspasia* more.—— What wou'd this unhappy Monarch have done, if she had behav'd like *Aspasia*? Why, he must certainly, just in that Moment, as he was so violent in his Love, have married the first Wench he had met, or have perish'd in his own Flames.

The Scheme of over-turning the Government, and destroying the Sultan, being very well plann'd, and agreed to,

(II)

to, I am a little puzzled how the Mutineers shou'd escape; for I can hear of but one Galley that was provided, and that wou'd not more than accommodate the Lovers and their Ladies, with proper Mariners to conduct 'em: For if *Purchas* may be believ'd, at the Time of *Amurath*, a *Turkish Galley* was look'd upon as very large, and of great Use, that wou'd carry eight Sailors (or Oar-Men) twenty fighting Men, their Officers, and Provision for two Months. — If this Account be true, what was to become of all the rest of the Associates? For, by *Leontius's* Account,

*Above a hundred Voices thunder'd
round him,
And every Voice was Liberty and
Greece.*

Which, by the Bye, was not quite so wise, to make such an Uproar so near the Palace. For Shouting and Hollowing will naturally bring People to enquire the Cause; and, had this happen'd

happen'd now, the whole Plot had been unravell'd, and the *Grecians* lost their Liberty for a Huzza.

The Conspirators, in the Midst of their Consultations, are suddenly dispers'd by the Approach of *Mustapha*; who comes to tell *Cali*, that the Emperor is walking that Way, and wou'd be private. — The Emperor appears, and is met with a fine Panegyric from *Cali*, who receives it very kindly, orders a Counsellor to Death, and puts *Irene* into the Protection of the Bassa; not from any great Opinion of his Virtue, but because

*His Blood, frozen with sixty Win-
ters Camps,
At Sight of Female Charms will
glow no more.*

The pious Bassa refuses this great Charge, and begs Leave to perform a Pilgrimage to *Mecca*; which the hasty Monarch denies, and perswades him rather to stay, spill some more Blood, and do a
few

few more Mischiefs first; then, quoth he,

*'Tis Time to think of Pray'rs, of
Pilgrimage, and Peace.*

Mahomet, tho' the greatest Man in the Play, I don't think the wisest; for when he hears of *Cali's* Treachery, instead of instantly putting him to Death and secure his own Person, resolves to have a little Sport with him, by Way of hunting him round the World; as we turn Foxes loose, only to have the Pleasure of finding 'em again: And indeed, he proposes a pretty long Chace; I think, it is from Pole to Pole; and is determin'd to have him, tho' the North Wind shou'd stand his Friend — But *Mustapha*, who, it seems, was not so keen a Sportsman as his Master, is for making sure of him now they have him, and not trust to a future Chace. — Yet *Mahomet* was so much in Love, that *Cali's* Crime slipt over, without any particular Notice taken of it — and

C

tho'

tho' the Aga gives a long Description of the two Strangers he had seen with *Cali* in the Garden, *Mahomet* never gave himself the Trouble to have 'em enquir'd after, or even to ask who they were suspected to be.

The next Thing that struck me, was *Mahomet's* uncommon Courtship of *Irene*; for instead of Flattery, and other gay Delusions to engage Affection, generally made use of by an eager Lover, he courts her out of the *Alcoran*; or, as my Lord *Foppington* says, seems to think a Woman shou'd fall in Love with him, for his endeavouring to perswade her she has not one single Virtue in the whole Composition of her Soul and Body — In short, his Arguments are so strong, or her Understanding so weak, that at last she seems to be quite of his Opinion, and throws herself, without farther Trouble, into the Sultan's Embraces. — What Pity 'tis a virtuous Christian cou'd not make a better Defence against an amorous Heathen!

I was

I was greatly surpriz'd at the sudden Passion of *Abdalla*, which broke out in such extravagant Gusts of Rage and Tumult, that one wou'd have thought the *Turk* had been seiz'd with a sudden Frenzy; and whatever *Mahomet* may think of his Passion, *Abdalla's* is as much above him for Fire, high Flights, and preceporate Designs, as Champaign, in its Effect, is above the Operations of Small Beer. — 'Tis well *Abdalla* had not *Mahomet's* Power; for, if he had, we shou'd doubtless have seen the Palace, Gardens, *Cali*, and all his Friends in a Flame, in one Moment's Time.

His Passion (as I imagin'd it wou'd) prov'd fatal to the Scheme of Liberty; for we find his Rage set him upon Baseness, to the Ruin of old *Cali*, and the rest of the Conspirators, except *Demetrius*; and how he came to escape is a most surprizing Piece of good Fortune. What! the *only* Man at whom his Rage was levell'd, that
he

he should be the *only* one that escap'd; nay more, had still Power enough to fetch his Mistress away, even when *Abdalla* was present? — who, instead of seizing the Lady, or destroying *Demetrius*, very kindly slipt aside, while the two Lovers whip'd into the Galley so often mention'd, and sail'd away. — This Incident, tho' very diverting, I must confess, favours greatly of the Marvellous.

The Death of *Irene*, tho' not approv'd of by some of the Spectators, I think very natural and decent. The Reason for her Death, and the Manner of executing it, may be highly justified — *Cali's* dying Confession, that *Mahomet* was to have been murder'd in *Irene's* Chamber, must, doubtless, alarm a less passionate Monarch than *Mahomet*: Nor am I at all surpriz'd, at the speedy Vengeance he took of her — I doubt not, but some of our *Connoisseurs* expected, according to the old Story, to have seen her Head taken off by *Mahomet*,
at

at one Stroke of his Scymitar; which, when perform'd to the Height of Expectation, cou'd have been but a Pantomime Trick, and beneath the Dignity of a Tragedy; unless you cou'd suppose, the Hero was bred a Butcher.

— As to the Trick, perhaps, some of our tender hearted Countrymen, wou'd have eas'd that Objection, by having her Head cut off in good Earnest, and so have had the Pleasure of a new *Irene* every Night.

But, I think it is better as it is, and the Tale finely adapted to the Stage. — *Irene's* Innocence being prov'd to the Sultan, gives him Occasion to reflect upon his hasty Sentence, and may be the Means of preventing many an innocent Subject from falling unheard, under his Displeasure.

As to the Epilogue, it is of too delicate, too refin'd, too noble, too eloquent, too witty, and too new a Kind to deserve Applause, or incur Censure.

(18)

Censure. It is its own Satire, and he
that has a mind to Burlesque it, has
nothing to do but to Copy it.

I am,

S I R,

Your humble Servant, &c.

F I N I S.

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